

Section A-2

Family Readiness Groups (FRG)

The contents of this Toolkit have been developed to assist you in your efforts to support family readiness. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information provided is current and accurate. However, because statutory and regulatory changes may have occurred since the publication of this Toolkit, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs cannot assume responsibility for its continued accuracy. Before taking any significant action based on the contents of this Toolkit, you should contact a subject matter expert in your chain of command to secure the most current information.

Family Readiness Groups (FRG)

Volunteer Management – Job Descriptions

In the Toolkit section devoted to Volunteer Recruitment and Retention, a clear link was established between the institutionalization of volunteer positions and your ability to attract and retain volunteers. Volunteers are most likely to believe their contributions are meaningful when they believe they are filling a meaningful and well-defined role as part of a team. Written job descriptions facilitate the linking of the volunteer to the position.

Write simple, accurate job descriptions. Make the job seem do-able by providing a well-defined job description. A job description should include a job title, a brief description of the work to be performed, time required, when/where the job must be performed, and an estimate of the number of volunteers needed. By providing details, you help potential volunteers to decide if this is a job they can do and one they will be comfortable performing. If your descriptions are not specific, prospective volunteers may feel unsure of the demands that will be placed upon them and will be hesitant to commit. If you are unclear about what will be expected, those who do volunteer may quickly decide that they have gotten in over their heads or have been asked to do something decidedly different from what they signed up for.

The position title in a volunteer job description should describe what the volunteer actually does as well as their range of responsibilities. If possible, provide both a first and second-line supervisor. The volunteers should go to supervisors for guidance and to ask questions. In some units, the supervisor for a FRG Chairperson would be the family readiness program coordinator.

Duties should be described clearly and to-the-point. This is the “what” and the “how” of the position with a list of specific tasks. The ultimate goal or results of the program and volunteer service should be detailed. When volunteer jobs are defined in terms of results, individuals gain a sense of achievement, and programs are more effective because people understand what they are supposed to accomplish.

State the actual time commitment that is required for the position. One way to lose volunteers is to underestimate the time the volunteer will need to do the job. It is difficult to recruit volunteers if they do not have an idea of how much time they will need to commit. People are hesitant to agree to volunteer if the commitment is open-ended. Positions and responsibilities often evolve according to the energy and creativity of the volunteers. One short-term volunteer position may increase in responsibilities as the volunteer becomes comfortable in the position and seeks additional duties. Set a time for evaluation so that the job description may be changed to accurately reflect what is currently being accomplished.

State all of the qualifications necessary to include skills, experience, abilities, and physical capabilities. Specify the required training/orientations, including content and duration.

Shown below is a format for a job description:

1. Job title: The name of the position
2. Objective: Why is the job necessary? What do you hope to accomplish?
3. Responsibilities: List specific talks or areas of responsibility
4. Time required: State the actual time commitment as accurately as possible
5. Qualifications: List specific skills, interest or education recommended (i.e. a newsletter editor would need computer and word-processing skills)
6. Training: Specify the types of training that would be provided through the unit. The unit does not have to “teach” all the training. Often the unit will send volunteers to training within the community such as “Active Listening and Communication” for key callers, Family Team Building, and a Family Service Center orientation.
7. Staffing: Estimate of the number of volunteers needed to do the job.
8. Evaluation: Who is responsible? It’s important that the volunteer has a chance to evaluate their experience and training.

A sample job description for a FRG Chairman may include specific duties such as:

- Obtain knowledge of the unit mission, existing FRG standard operating procedures, and community resources.
- Help organize unit family readiness group.
- Plan and facilitate unit FRG meetings (in conjunction with unit commander and family readiness program staff).
- Assist in recruiting, training, and managing volunteers using unit family readiness resources.
- Ensure that communication is maintained among members.
- Call “key callers” to activate telephone tree/roster.
- Work in conjunction with unit leadership to minimize stress and rumors.
- Submit information to unit newsletter.

The Navy Ombudsman program published an extensive regulation (NAVPERS 15571A) to explain the Navy Family Ombudsman Program outlining the specific functions of the ombudsman. A distinct job description for an individual ombudsman is developed by the specific unit command. The ombudsman is the link between the command and Navy families and serves as a liaison with the following duties: (not inclusive)

GUARD & RESERVE FAMILY READINESS PROGRAMS TOOLKIT

- Keep the commanding officer informed regarding the general morale, health, and welfare of command families.
- Function as a trained member of the command team that takes care of families.
- Disseminate official information to the families.
- Let the families know that the command is concerned about them, cares about their well-being, and will respect their desire for confidentiality.
- Educate families on how the successful operation of the command affects them.

Each Guard and Reserve component has their individual regulations and guidelines for family readiness programs. Use these guidelines and individualize the volunteer job descriptions to fit the needs of your unit. Look at other service regulations, share information, and profit from the wealth of information available. Your unit, the service members, family members, and family readiness program will benefit.